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4-7-2013

# Senior Recital: Benjamin Montgomery, composition

Benjamin Montgomery

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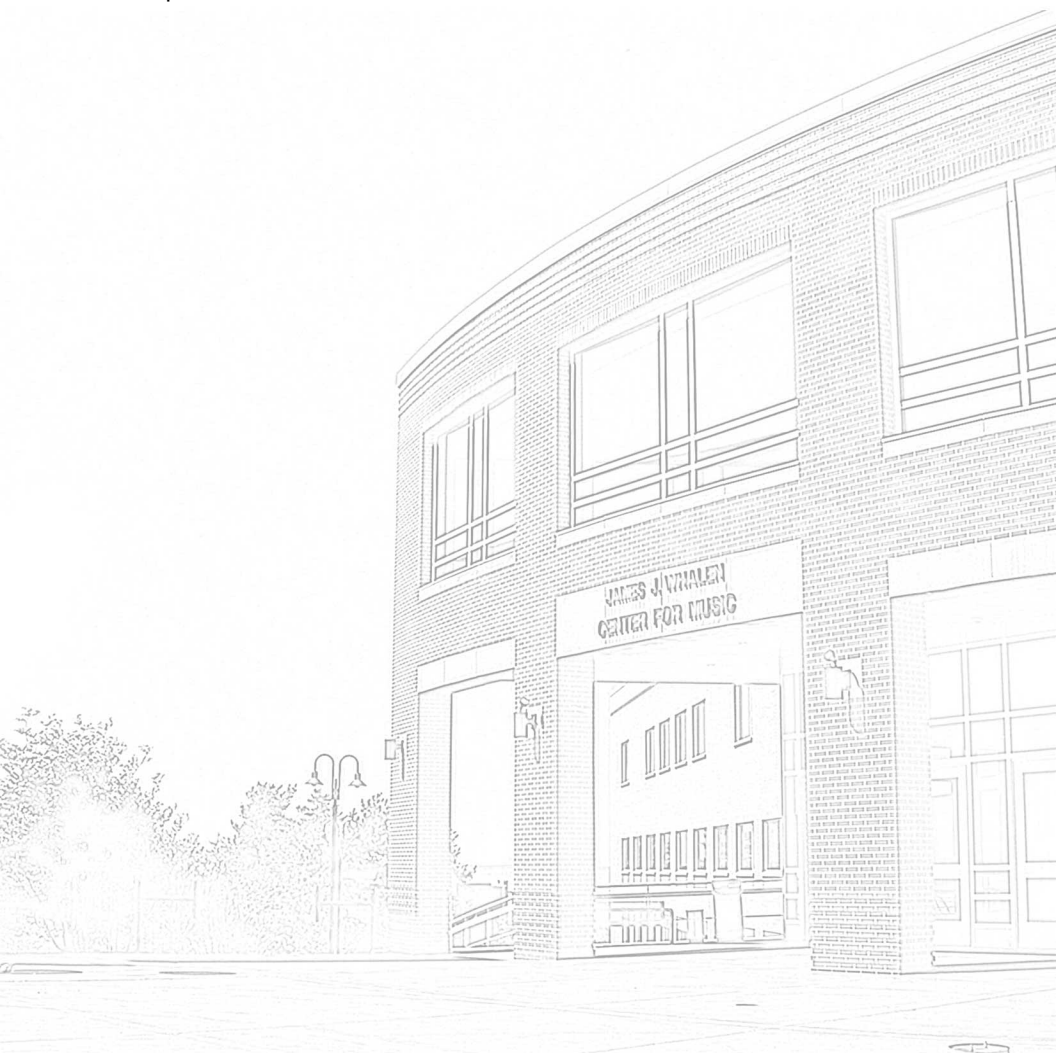
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# Senior Recital:

## Benjamin Montgomery, composition

Ford Hall  
Sunday April 7th, 2013  
3:00 pm



# ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

# Program

## Dilation

### Movement II

*Ossic Saxophone Quartet:*  
*Junwen Jia, soprano saxophone*  
*Benjamin Montgomery, alto saxophone*  
*Gregory Sisco, tenor saxophone*  
*Alexander Judge, baritone saxophone*

## Poetics

text: A. R. Ammons

*Poetics Chorus*  
*Benjamin Montgomery, conductor*

## Synergy

*Richard Rose, alto saxophone / interactive electronics*

## Pitch Black

- I. Restriction, Isolation
- II. Absence, Disorientation
- III. Fear, Imagination, Adrenaline
- IV. Acceptance, Reliance

*Half Brassed Five:*  
*Samuel Thurston, trumpet I*  
*Thomas Pang, trumpet II*  
*Robert Oldroyd, french horn*  
*Joshua Zimmer, trombone*  
*William Conners, tuba*

# Intermission

## Deconstruction

*Sean Gerard Cotty, piano*  
*Deconstruction Orchestra*  
*Patrick Valentino, conductor*

# Program Notes

## Dilation Mvt. II

*Dilation* focuses on the concept of expansion and contraction. This is represented in the treatment of meter, which fluxuates almost constantly. While the first and third movements have a perpetual pulse, the second has less consistent patterns and a more free nature. Gestures flow from one to another, creating small expansions within phrases. The dilating effect can also be heard in the shape of the piece which is a large arch: beginning very subtly, growing to the climactic theme, and then fading out in a similar manor as it opened.

## Poetics

I look for the way  
things will turn  
out spiraling from a center,  
the shape  
things will take to come forth  
in  
  
so that the birch tree white  
touched black at the branches  
will stand out  
wind-glittering  
totally its apparent self:

I look for the forms  
things want to come as

from what black wells of  
possibility  
how a thing will  
unfold:

not the shape on paper --  
though  
that, too -- but the  
uninterfering means on paper:

not so much looking for the  
shape  
as being available  
to any shape that may be  
summoning itself  
through me  
from the self not mine but  
ours.

- A. R. Ammons

## **Synergy**

*Synergy* refers to the juxtaposition of both an acoustical instrument and the electronics through which the instrument's sound is manipulated, as well as the concept behind the musical material.

The electronics were created in MAX/MSP, an object-based programming language. An Ipad is attached to the bell of the saxophone and the accelerometer in the Ipad measures the motions of the performer. The program receives this information and alters different aspects of the sound. It begins in a slow, introspective world and is then contrasted with a faster, almost dance like section. These two are brought together in the culmination, the synergy of ideas.

## **Pitch Black**

The inspiration for this piece was the idea of being in complete darkness, lost in a cave, and the piece describes the emotions one would experience if left in that state permanently.

The first movement deals with the loss of sight and the restrictions that result. Without any visual frame of reference, a sense of severe isolation sets in on us. The second movement focuses on the disorientating effects of our scenario. We do not know where walls or obstacles lie in our path, and balance is thrown off as our eyes vainly try to focus. Then, in the third movement, we attempt to create a mental image of our surroundings, only to find that our imagination has filled that void with our fears, and we struggle to discern what is real. Terrors seem to swoop out of the darkness towards us. Our adrenaline begins to rise in response and we grow frantic. After awhile, our heart rate begins to slow, and we breathe more deeply, trying to control our mind. Our hearing and other senses grow stronger as we begin to rely on them more. In the fourth movement we find new ways to approach and ultimately understand the darkness. We start to accept that it exists.

This piece is not about victoriously escaping from the darkness, but rather learning to live in it. It focuses on when we are powerless to change an unfortunate situation, and the only way to proceed is to grow in understanding and self control as we cope with the darkness.

## Deconstruction

The concerto is a reflection of my own process of composing, and how my conceptualization of a piece changes throughout its creation. The material consists of three sections, representing general phases of my conscious development. These sections are separated by an interlude, reinterpreted each time, which also opens the piece.

The first phase of my compositional process is one in which many ideas float through my mind, and different possible interpretations and directions are considered. The material is very disorganized and in a rather chaotic state while I write different gestures as they come to me, to be revisited later. This is represented in the first section of the piece, through its very dense, loud, and complex nature, within a very simple A-B-A form.

During the second phase, I slow my thoughts enough to set a controlled direction and structure for the entirety of the piece. There are small successes and failures while I progress through this phase. This is represented in the second section while I search for mental clarity, analyze the material I have created, trying to look at everything in a completely different way. I limit myself to one idea and develop it more in depth through theme and variation form. It uses the same harmonic concepts as the first, applied in different, extended ways and treated with more freedom. Attempting to create a contrast with the first section's density results in a slow, introspective, and spacious effect, focusing more on different colors throughout the orchestra as well as the range of the piano.

The third phase is bittersweet. As the piece becomes focused, it also becomes clear what material is vital and what is unnecessary. Realizing that I need to delete fragments to preserve the integrity of the piece causes frustration and as I write, the irrelevant material is always in the back on my head. I have to fight back the old tendencies to use too much material. This is portrayed in the mood of the third section, which is in classical sonata form (thought to characterize balance and sophistication) and primarily develops material from the first section in new ways. Through this, I try to reference a "higher" sense of purpose for the piece. Nearing its completion, I realized I could spend a lifetime making minor changes of little significance to a piece of this length; the only way to complete it is for me to conceptualize it as a finished product. The piece ends with a large chord as the orchestra stops and the piano holds through. The sustained piano chord represents my acceptance, of and coming to peace with, my creation.

## Poetics Chorus

### **Soprano**

Rachel Mikol  
Kathleen Wallace  
Shelley Attadgie  
Lauren Smith

### **Alto**

Mollie Hamilton  
Taylor Eike  
Katrina Kuka  
Ryan Kennedy

### **Tenor**

Thomas Riley  
Peter Blanford  
Kevin Fortin  
Miguel Torres

### **Bass**

Travis Pilsits  
Michael Roddy  
Jeremy Pletter  
Justin Parish

## Deconstruction Orchestra

### **Violin I**

Joohyun Lee  
Ryann Aery  
Claire Wilcox  
Jenna Jordan

### **Violin II**

Jason Kim  
Marcus Hogan  
Emilie Benigno  
Kathleen Wallace

### **Viola**

Carly Rockenhauser  
Austin Savage  
Jonathan Fleischman  
Kelly Sadwin

### **Cello**

David Fenwick  
Sean Swartz

### **Bass**

Andrew Ryan  
Lindsey Orcutt

### **Piccolo**

Sarah Peskanov

### **Flute**

Sophia Ennocenti

### **Oboe**

Candice Crawford  
Jacob Walsh

### **Clarinet**

Kelsey Paquin  
Justine Call

### **Bassoon**

Stanley Howard  
Marissa D'Ambrosio

### **Horn**

Emma Staudacher  
M. Jacob Factor  
Aubrey Landsfeld  
William Llarch

### **Trumpet**

Samuel Thurston  
Aaron Scoccia

### **Trombone**

Joshua Zimmer  
Justin Oswald

### **Percussion**

Jessica Linden

### **Timpani**

Keegan Sheehy